

PROBLEMS AND SOLUTIONS OF TRANSLATING MODAL UNITS IN ENGLISH AND UZBEK LITERARY TEXTS

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Abstract: The translation of modal units in literary texts remains one of the most complex tasks in translation studies due to the semantic, pragmatic, and stylistic functions modality performs in language. Modal units express the speaker's attitude toward reality, including notions of necessity, possibility, obligation, probability, and emotional evaluation. English and Uzbek differ significantly in the ways they encode modality, which creates serious challenges for translators. This article explores the main problems encountered in translating modal units between English and Uzbek literary texts and discusses possible solutions aimed at preserving meaning, stylistic nuance, and pragmatic intent. The study emphasizes the importance of contextual and functional approaches in achieving translation adequacy.

Keywords: modality, modal units, literary translation, English–Uzbek translation, pragmatic meaning

Modality is a universal linguistic category that reflects the speaker's subjective attitude toward the content of an utterance. In literary discourse, modal units serve not only a grammatical function but also a stylistic and expressive one, contributing to character portrayal, narrative perspective, emotional coloring, and authorial intention. The accurate translation of modal units is therefore essential for preserving both the semantic content and the aesthetic value of a literary work. English and Uzbek belong to different language families and exhibit distinct grammatical systems for expressing modality. English primarily uses modal verbs and modal constructions, while Uzbek

relies on suffixes, auxiliary verbs, particles, and lexical means. These structural differences complicate the process of translation, especially in literary texts where modal meanings are often implicit and context-dependent. As a result, translators frequently face difficulties in achieving equivalence between the source and target texts.

In linguistic theory, modality is commonly associated with meanings related to necessity, possibility, obligation, permission, probability, and volition. Modal units include modal verbs, modal adverbs, modal particles, and various periphrastic constructions. In English, modal verbs such as *must*, *may*, *might*, *should*, and *can* are highly polysemous and capable of expressing different types of modality depending on context. In Uzbek, similar meanings are conveyed through constructions with auxiliary verbs such as (*kerak*) and (*mumkin*), verbal suffixes, and lexical items like (*ehtimol*) and (*balki*).

The absence of direct one-to-one correspondences between English and Uzbek modal systems often results in translation difficulties. While English modal verbs are compact and multifunctional, Uzbek modal meanings tend to be expressed more explicitly through analytic constructions. This contrast requires translators to make interpretative decisions rather than rely on literal translation.

One of the major problems in translating modal units arises from structural mismatches between the two languages. English modal verbs do not have exact grammatical equivalents in Uzbek, which may lead to either over translation or loss of modal meaning. Literal translation often fails to convey the intended nuance, especially when a modal verb expresses epistemic modality rather than obligation. Another significant difficulty is the polysemy of English modal verbs. A single modal verb can express different meanings depending on the communicative situation. If the translator misinterprets the type of modality involved, the translated text may convey an incorrect or distorted meaning. This issue is particularly critical in literary texts, where subtle modal distinctions contribute to narrative tension and psychological depth.

Modal units are closely tied to norms of politeness, indirectness, and social relations. English literary dialogue frequently employs modal verbs to soften statements or express hesitation, while Uzbek may prefer more direct forms. Failure to adapt modal expressions to the pragmatic conventions of the target language can result in unnatural or stylistically inappropriate translations.

Additionally, modal units contribute significantly to stylistic characterization in literature. The choice of modal expressions may reflect a character's personality, emotional state, or social status. Inaccurate translation of modality can alter the reader's perception of characters and disrupt the stylistic coherence of the text.

Effective translation of modal units requires a contextual approach that prioritizes meaning over form. Translators must analyze the broader discourse context, narrative situation, and communicative intention of the speaker in order to identify the type of modality being expressed. Such analysis helps prevent misinterpretation and supports more accurate translation choices.

Functional equivalence is another essential strategy in translating modal units. Rather than attempting to reproduce the exact grammatical structure of the source text, translators should aim to preserve the function and effect of modality in the target language. This approach allows for flexibility in selecting linguistic means that are natural and appropriate in Uzbek. Compensation techniques are often necessary when modal meanings cannot be expressed directly. Translators may introduce additional lexical items, modify sentence structure, or use alternative grammatical constructions to convey the same modal nuance. These adjustments help maintain semantic completeness and stylistic balance.

Pragmatic adaptation is particularly important in literary translation. Modal expressions should be adjusted to align with the communicative norms and cultural expectations of the target audience while retaining the author's original intent. This ensures that the translated text remains both meaningful and culturally acceptable.

In conclusion, the translation of modal units between English and Uzbek literary texts presents a range of linguistic, semantic, and pragmatic challenges. Differences in grammatical structure, the polysemous nature of modal verbs, and cultural variation in expressing modality often hinder direct equivalence. Successful translation depends on the translator's ability to interpret context accurately, apply functional equivalence, and adapt modal meanings pragmatically. By focusing on meaning and stylistic effect rather than formal similarity, translators can effectively convey modal nuances and preserve the artistic value of literary works.

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